newsletter

October 2022 | Issue 3. Vol.3

eSafe CONFERENCE

'CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING IN A DIGITAL WORLD'

FEB 6TH 2023
ABU DHABI

WE ARE HONORED with the patronage of
H E Sheikh Nahyan bin Mabarak Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence

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MARKETPLACE FOR EDUCATION

eSafe

جمعية الإمارات للإنترنت الآمن

EMIRATES SAFER INTERNET SOCIETY

OCTOBER 2022   ISSUE 3   VOL. 3

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Eng. Adel Salem Alkaff AlHashmi

Chairman - eSafe Conference &
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SPECIAL ISSUE EDITORIAL

This is a special edition of eSafe Magazine celebrating a major milestone in our efforts to spread awareness about child online safety. We are honored to share with our readers that H E Sheikh Nahyan bin Mabarak Al Nahyan (Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, UAE) has graciously accepted his patronage as Honorary President to Emirates Safer Internet Society (eSafe).

The eSafe Board takes this opportunity to express their boundless gratitude for this patronage and astutely looks forward to diligently fulfilling the mandate of keeping children safe online in the United Arab Emirates and beyond.

"Digital Well Being As an opening move to implement child online safety globally, eSafe is stepping in to this global move with a conference on "Understanding children's well-being in a digital world". This conference is the superintendent, and it will be a pivotal move for eSafe society.

Currently, children are not only spending more time on the internet, but they are also getting there far sooner, at a very young age. Hand in hand are the serious risks, including cyberbullying, risks to privacy, etc., which have particularly become acute amid the COVID-19 crisis and the surge in screen time it has precipitated across children of all ages. It's fascinating to find that developed countries all across the globe have started considering child online safety with due importance. Some of them have already started brainstorming on creating policy frameworks to address this growing concern. It is indeed a matter of pride that the UAE is a front runner in identifying and addressing child online safety as a concern that, if not addressed, has the potential to be a serious threat to the future generation of our great nation.

eSafe is continuously joining hands with public and private sectors in the digital space, working strategically to promote online safety while children continue to enjoy the educational, social interaction, creativity and health benefits. Metaverse and other such initiatives are bringing both opportunities and challenges. eSafe is closely observing such recent technology changes across the world and tirelessly working on how to benefit it to the society.

Since our inception, we have been working with schools, colleges, professionals, and the community at large to raise awareness about safe online experiences.

Going forward, we would like to foster and nurture partnerships with government entities to advocate for digital safety and well-being policies. We look forward to work hand in hand with tech companies to promote the use of safety measures on their platforms, keeping children as users in their minds, and relevant regulating authorities to promote children's digital literacy and online safety skills.

eSafe will continue to ensure that, while children reach out to the unprecedented opportunities available to them in the midst of the digital explosion of information, they have a safe and positive online experience.

You will get to read articles on different aspects of parenting in the digital era, its possibilities, challenges, and some insights on how best parents, teachers, and children can sail through this to synthesize knowledge.

ENG. ADEL SALEM ALKAFF ALHASHMI
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Under the Patronage of His Excellency Sheikh Nahyan bin Mabarak Al Nahyan
UAE Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
on

"CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING IN A DIGITAL WORLD"

Monday, 6th February - 2023,
Anantara Eastern Mangroves Abu Dhabi Hotel, UAE
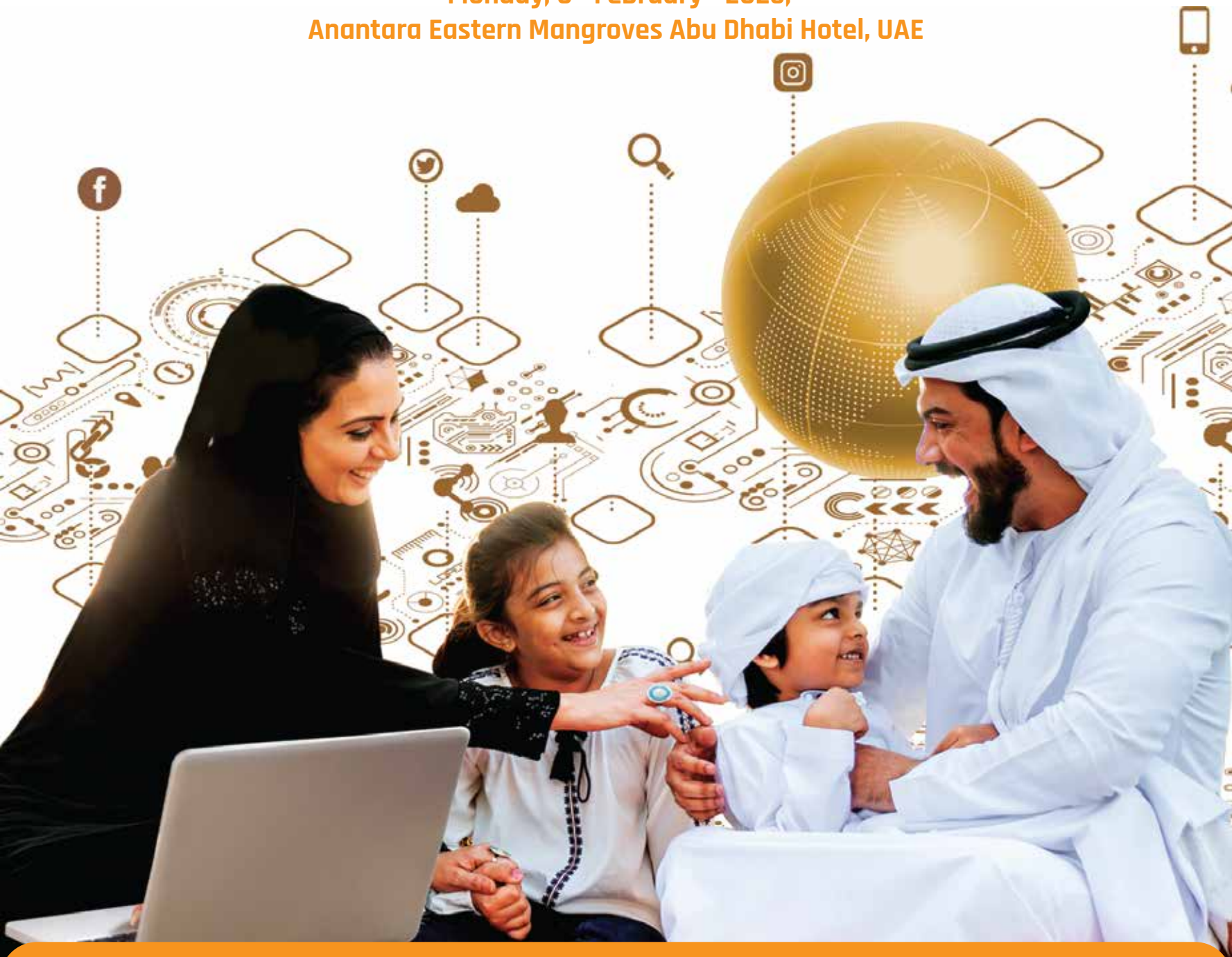
Event Theme & Discussion Areas:

» **Safety of children in the digital world.**

» **Children and families well-being in the digital world.**

» **Role of civic engagement and partnerships in promoting digital well-being.**

Dr. Hamed Alneyadi

TikTok Safety Advisory Board Member &
eSafe Board Member

DIGITAL WELL-BEING

➡ *Encourage workers to switch off gadgets.*

➡ *Limit communications that are not critical.*

➡ *Reduce online meetings.*

➡ *Lower eyestrain in frequent device users.*

➡ *Be aware of unforeseen mental health impacts.*

It is very essential that we provide tools to control our time on Tiktok application. This helps the user to spend the time productively while improving physical and mental health. The overuse of social media during workday will affect the person's ability and energy negatively.

Therefore, providing options for the parents to manage and control screen time of their children on TikTok will promote healthy usage and proactively assist the user to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

It is very important to understand that being away from the devices is not the only solution, but instead they are supposed to interact physically with friends and family for a better life ahead.

Children above 13 and youngsters will have less stress and low anxiety levels if they use less hours on internet. Moreover, I suggest that we have to develop features that are less disruptive or add the feature to turn off notifications that distract children.Besides that, we need to screen time tracking to help users to minimize screen time.

How can we encourage digital wellness among children and employees?

• **Encourage workers to switch off.** Managers can set specific times during which employees shall make themselves available for discussion and calls.They can urge co-workers not to contact each other for work-related issues unless they have urgent matters to discuss. Employees can also switch off notifications on all their devices.

• **Limit communications that are not critical.** Although it is essential for employees, colleagues and managers to communicate, workers' digital wellness is negatively affected when they are swamped with communications, particularly email. This cause's unnecessary stress as time is taken from their work to respond to emails and other forms of communication. Since not all, these communications are important; employers should encourage workers to limit emails that are not critical.

• **Reduce the number of online meetings.** While video conferencing is necessary in today's digital workplaces, many employees suffer from video call fatigue. Although online meetings can save time and enable employees to connect with their colleagues, they can also be exhausting as employees must be constantly and actively participating. Companies can set aside at least one day a week that is free of meetings to reduce stress.

• **Lower eyestrain in frequent device users.** Products such as dark panels that cover screens or special lenses that go over glasses to reduce glare have been developed to help and reduce eyestrain. Recommendations also exist for how large information on the screen should be, what settings and resolution should be implemented, how often eyes need to be rested, and the optimal distance between eyes and the screen.

• **Be aware of unforeseen mental health impacts.** One example of an adverse feature to mental health is the endless scroll addition to social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram. This has been attributed to internet addiction, which has been correlated with high levels of anxiety, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, depression, poor time management and impulsiveness.

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Arun Gopinath

Executive Principal,
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THE CYBER NETWORK
PREDATORS, MEDIATORS OR BENEFACTORS

A human being, the most superior being on the planet, racked his brain and invented the mechanicalbrain, but who is the master and who is the slave?

Are we, who are supposed to be controlling the machine, being controlled by the machine?

Good question, isn't it? The answer lies with us as well.

Technology will inevitably serve the needs of everyone once it is ultimately integrated into all aspects of this dynamic and new culture,

but how prepared are we to face this bare truth, which is gradually monopolizing the future?

Are we, or are we not, preparing ourselves and our children for this technological take-over?

The human brain versus the mechanical brain.

The creation of genius minds is taking the world into the unknown beyond.
Whatever is said and done, we must accept it while remaining within the boundaries so as not to go over-board.

All aspects have their own Pros and Cons, Dos & Don'ts, Yes & Nos. This is where the role of irresponsible adults features.

Are we, who are of the Pre-Google age, capable of advising the current generation in the Post-Google age? Learn if we must, because these are our children on the fast track!

These are children born into the cyber-world. It sounds exquisite and fantastic, isn't it?

All good, but as adults, we need to take heed and intervene in the right manner to ensure the adherence to netiquette, or Internet Etiquette.

Children, who are our future and for whom we are paving the way, must be kept e-safe, which is the need of the hour! Each and every child is a very special somebody for whom the unknown future is waiting with wide open arms to embrace them. We love to see them happy and safe and not go astray.

They're tech savvy and always on trend!We are inching closer to being the cybernauts of the future.
On hearing the word "cyber," it gives us the jitters. We are witnesses to these children falling prey to falling.

prey and becoming glued to FB, Insta, and Twitter. Flashy though it looks, with promises and fantasies of all kinds, if not cautious and controlled, it can be contagious, voracious and obsessive. Tread on the net with care or else the consequences will be a dire

scare.A click here and a click there, that's where the danger lies. A check here and a check there. That's where the harness fortifies.

With the pandemic spreading like wildfire around the globe, at the end of the year 2020, e-learning emerged. This brought on the compulsion of children having to compulsorily pick up the art of technology, right from the 3-year-olds to the oldest of learners. That was a tough span of time indeed! With the pandemic brought under control, campus classes have resumed.

This puts a question in front of the whole world; are we taking a U-turn in the educational field where technological progress is concerned? The answer can be both "Yes" and "No. Yes,

Because all the students are back, seated inside the classroom with the teacher delivering the lessons. No, because the classes have been upgraded with the latest technological aspects for lesson delivery.

Whatever "IT" is, and whatever is said and done, when "IT" is used cautiously, in the right manner, in the right proportion, the result will be amazing.

Let "IT" not control us; on the contrary, let "IT" be under our control. What is this "IT"? That's a good question, but the answer is obvious: information technology! Information is right at the fingertips of every individual.

So, take heart, for it is the need of the hour to ensure that we plant the seed of caution in our current generation, who are the vulnerable prey of the future.

Now it is for us to decide whether the cybernetwork is considered as' predators, mediators or 'benefactors'.

ARUN GOPINATH
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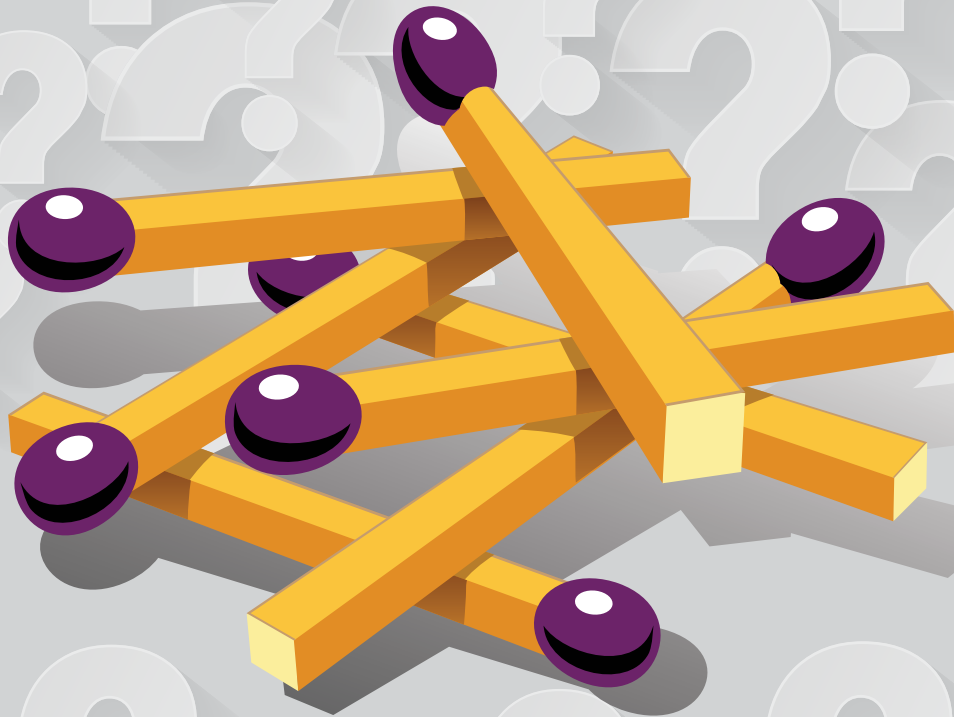✉ a.gopinath@thelazargroup.ae

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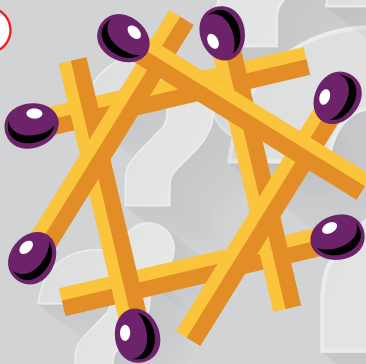(Engage Safely Amidst Fast
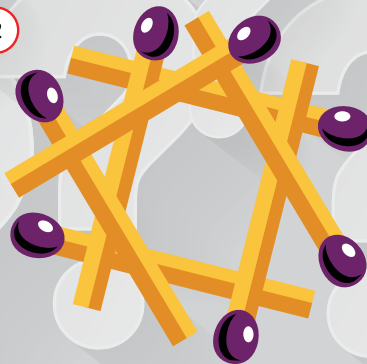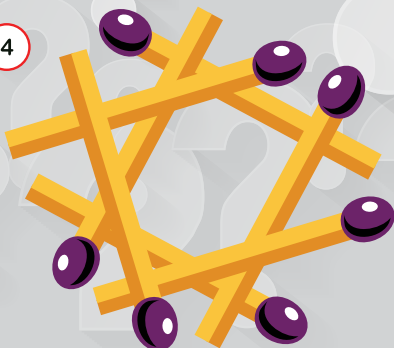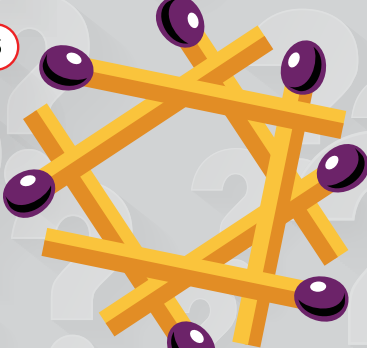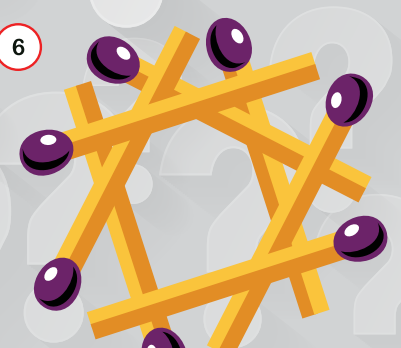Evolving Technological Yearnings)

MIND SPARK!
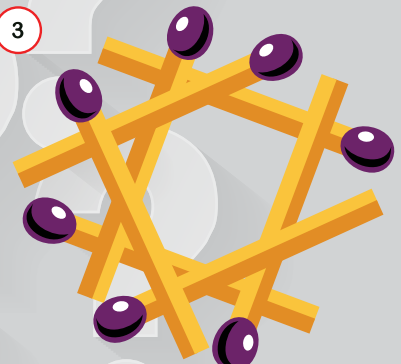
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Scan the QR code to submit your answer.

Jayesh Sebastian
MD & CEO, Tachyon360

WATCH OUT!
WHILE YOU ARE ONLINE.

Imagine driving through a rough terrain without any traffic signals or signals that are deceiving. Every inch of progress you make has the potential to endanger you. You, being online, are no different from driving though an unknown rough terrain. Every click you make, every page you visit, every unknown person you meet has the potential to cause harm.

The point is not to frighten you away from the possibilities of online world but to caution you to learn to avoid mistakes and traps. Children are more vulnerable to fall in danger. Children are getting exposed to online threats at a very early age. Also, they are spending more time online than ever before.The scenario demands us to develop more effective techniques to protect children against online threats. Cyberbullying and other forms of online violence can impact children's psychological health.

In this article, we will discuss the possibility of conquering some of the most common online threats as suggested by experts from all across the world.

1 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is the most common form of online threat against children. To make it worse, the majority of the children don't report cyberbullying incidents. According to a study, 47% of children have been the victims of cyberbullying at some stage.

Nowadays, online games have become a virtual playground for children. They can be ridiculed to get their personal details, and cyberbullying could start there.

If you want to protect your children against cyberbullying, be more comfortable talking to them more openly about what's happening in their lives. And, if they face any kind of cyberbullying, they should stand against it.

2 Phishing

Phishing is using emails to trick children into clicking malicious attachments and links. The hackers trick children into clicking on such links and can steal their personal data using them. Such links could be very difficult to detect for children.

A type of phishing known as smishing uses text messages or social media messengers to send such links. This type of phishing is more common these days.

If you want to save your children from phishing, teach them not to click on unknown emails and text from strangers. And they should be cautious about the messages that appear to be from their friends but seem "off" or do not have a genuine personal message attached.

3 Posting Private Information

Children do not consider social boundaries crucial. They post their daily-day stuff and personally identifiable information that shouldn't be made public.

To stop your children from posting their life on social media platforms, speak freely with them about public boundaries and what they should mean to them. But make sure you avoid being nosey.

4 Sexual Predators

Sexual predators stalk children on gaming and social media platforms. They try to get in touch with children on these platforms and pretend to become friends. But, their objective is to exploit their innocence and abuse their trust.

Mostly, such predators trick children into meeting somewhere. These incidents have become much more frequent after the introduction of online video games.

For this, again, talking to your children openly can turn out to be the most effective method of protecting them against sexual predators.

5 Falling For Scams

Children can easily fall prey to things that catch their attention. Like, free online games or special features, these are not easily accessible. Cybercriminals can identify potential victims and trick them into giving them what they want in return for a reward.

If you want to protect yourself and your children from scams, teach them that if an offer sounds too good to be true, it might not be what it seems. Moreover, being cautious of online offers that promise too much can save you from scams.

6 Downloading Malware

Children can often be tricked into downloading malware software as a game. Later, cybercriminals can use malware software to steal the data from the device. Such issues mostly occur when games are downloaded from an unknown source.

Educating children against malware is one of the best protections you can provide them. Moreover, you can get help from the comprehensive, cross-device cyber security software and related security protections to protect your child against malware.

7 Posts that Can Be Used Against Them

The internet does not come with a delete button. Things that once happened online stay there. And it might cause them trouble after 10 years.

The internet can cause serious harm. It can change your future in a single click. So, let your child know that nothing they posted will be removed permanently. So, they should be careful about everything they post on their social media platforms.

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The list is not exhaustive. Each threat listed here has different aspects too. It will go on and on if we start discussing one after another. As we discuss, a new form of online danger must have unearthed at some part of the world. This is a humble attempt to sensitize you on the most common, most dangerous threats in the digital world. If this helps you to be alert and cautious, the purpose is served.

Ms. Sanjana Bhardwaj

Online Child Protection Expert

PARENTING & SCREEN TIME STICKING A BALANCE

Parenting is often a natural process out of love and affection. It is largely being led by the mutual feeling of dependence between kids and parents. All animals are naturally being wired to take care of their off springs till them achieve a state of having ability to take care of their basic needs. Human Beings being at the zenith of intelligence have a broader perspective and need for parenting. Our parenting go way beyond raising children with ability to find and have food to raising emotionally, mentally sound and stable individuals. This concept of parenting holds good for generations to generations of mankind.

Each generation has its own opportunities and challenges in bringing up their children. Our generation has the opportunity of technological advancement. Well, nothing comes with only positives. Technology too has its flip side. Increased screen time and its effects on physical, mental and psychological wellbeing of our children is the challenge modern parents have to face and strike a balance at.

Let's explore what 'parenting in this generation' demands in general and what parents could possibly take care to address the concern of children spending a lot of time in front of different screens, without compromising on preparing them for the world awaiting them.

There is a need to become a connected parent by knowing the philosophy of connected parenting helps their children to make the best use of modern technology in a safe mode.

Parenting, as always, will always be…

1 To encourage a child's uniqueness

You should find out ways to encourage the hidden abilities within your child and then celebrate their uniqueness in a creative way that suits them. This is only possible if you spend quality time with your kids. As all children are unique by birth and have specific but different qualities that require mentorship and polishing only to lead a successful life. You should shape them according to their taste and will by giving their favorite skill (according to their interest) to them.

2 To nurture a child's qualities

Parents are the only personalities that watch their kids grow from small innocent infants to full-fledged young ones with a lot of qualities (bad/good), ideas, styles, preferences, and emotions. Now, parents have a strong responsibility to nurture those qualities within their kids that make them aware of themselves, that tell them who they are, what is right, and what is wrong in today's digital world.

3 To build a child's personality

Parents should be fully involved in the kid's personality from a very early stage. Make sure they are confident enough to explain any fear or any feeling from their parents freely. This confidence makes it easy to get into new experiences, rise from failures with no regret, struggle for innovations, and usage of positive technology towards success. And, finally, building a nourishing personality within your kids.
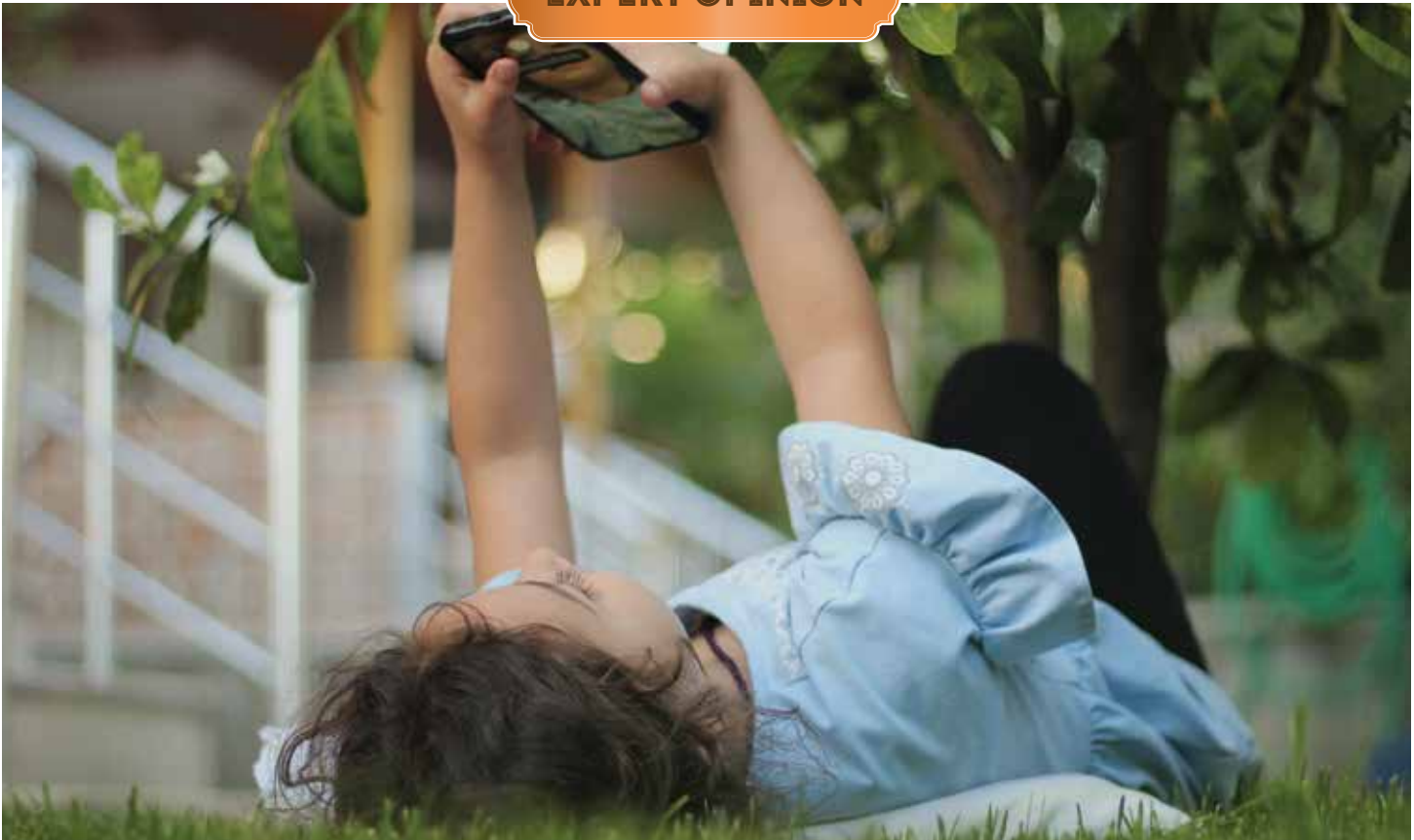
4 **To work on your self-esteem issues**

Being parents, you must know the most about your kid's approach. Kids copy their parents' lives and behavior. So, if you are not willing to accept the flaws and mistakes taken from you, never expect from your child too. Remember, parents are role models for their kids, so, you are responsible only to build healthy characteristics and the best version of your kids in the modern digital era.

Keep a check on screen time.

Being parents, we are worried about what technology is doing with our kids nowadays. Due to spending much of their time sharing on social media, they are having serious impacts like lack of emotional skills, decreasing their empathizing ability, and robbing them of creativity.
Following are some suggestive to keep a check on screen time to strike a balance between their indulgence in online world and real world.

Set Boundaries

Parents could define certain rules at home, digital devices should remain unplugged at mealtime, bedtime, study time, and during playtime. You can even identify rooms called screen-free zones like the reading room establishing some times of the day free of screens.

Track Your Mobile Use

Parents must consider good quality apps for tracking the apps used by their kids. Many apps have been introduced for this purpose available on android and iOS. It helps a lot in determining time usage on different apps, you can create filters or block useless/harmful materials for your kid's device.

Identify Stressors

This is one of the dangerous key elements in parenting. When parents have a workload at home with their devices, no time spent on their kids may lead to a bad impact on kids. Remember one thing, this is not their fault if you don't have quality time for your kids. Try to modify or handle your workload anywhere else like the office, as you need space and time both for your task completion. You must know that too much usage harms the family relationship badly.

Be Intentional

Being a parent, you are strong enough to decide what is right or wrong for you and your family's kids. So, plan according to your goals as you want to produce in your family. Pay attention to all family acts towards screen use. If you find something not good for kids, change it according to your plans but start with your behavior first.

Find Balance

Parents' heavy use of devises may result in negative inter-actions, lacking family learning opportunities, internal home tensions, and conflicts. So it is much necessary to find a balance of technology use for parents as well. Here are some suggested tips for maintaining balance:

1 *Strong look at the usage of screens at home and its benefits A self-introspection from time to time into the usage of different screens at home; mobile phones, desk tops, lap tops, tablets, television etc against the benefit of the time and energy spend in short and long term helps us realise and make changes in the way we deal with our screens.*

2 *Strong look at warning signs of unhealthy tech usage Some kids often complain of getting bored or unhappy, or sleepy due to the limited access to technology. As a result, they show harsh behavior, and neglect face-to-face communication with everyone at home and school. Parents should note these types of signs. No one knows what the current digital world will look like in the coming years from now, but it's sure that with growing technology, children's involvement also grows. So, as a parent, you should update the defini-tion of healthy or unhealthy effects or usage of tech towards your children, it's a healthy responsibility.*

Prepare our children for the future, while keeping them human

Parenting is not just about infusing values and beliefs in children that we believe and practice but to create individ-uals with strong values and consensus to decide right and wrong as they face their world. There is no doubt that the world ahead is a tech savvy, tech lead one. Our children must be equipped not just to use the technology but to create and improvise to create a better world for them and the generations to come. As they embrace this journey called life, they must have a sound body and mind capable to protect and preserve Humanity. Sticking a balance using technology and engage in the real world is thus quite important. Parents have a key role to play to ensure the balance.

As humans, there is no better duty for us than keeping our next generation intact and capable.

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eSafe
جمعية الإمارات للإنترنت الآمن
EMIRATES SAFER INTERNET SOCIETY

Yaser Saeed Al Fulaiti

Board Member & General Secretary

MAKE THE BEST OF ICT WHILE
BEING SAFE, SOUND AND SENSIBLE

Kids are exposed to the online world from a very young age. This fact alone does not allow us to make any sort of value judgement though regardless of our proclivity to do so. This is just a fact of our lives. There is ample evidence which shows that Gen-Z has grown up viewing mobile phones as a fact of life as opposed to previous generations and this has therefore caused them to use such devices with free abandon. It is also abundantly clear that the major reason kids use devices such as phones and laptops is to gain access the online communities and forums. There is friendship and community to be found in such groups and it is even more appealing when that friendship is focused on a particular goal like discussing an anime or a game. There is a plethora of such forums dedicated to all sorts of niches from gaming to memes in many subreddits. Once they gain access such forums, they will inevitably be exposed to inappropriate content even without them wanting to view it. On the internet, they can just as easily learn something useful as they can be corrupted and the result depends on how one uses one's time online. This is easier said than done since even adults cannot stop scrolling through endless posts of Facebook and Instagram as they while away huge portions of life. If that is so with adults, how much more difficult will it be for kids to control themselves and reduce the time they spend online? The dangers of the online world are many, ranging from cyberbullying and online grooming to ideological persuasion, and it is the responsibility of the parents to monitor their child's internet usage.

YouTube, Snapchat, and Instagram are the most frequented platforms by Gen-Z and it is easy to see why. Watching countless videos, shorts, reels, and gaining easy access to multiple forums are appealing to the young mind. These activities promote low attention spans and a desire for instant gratification that impedes healthy development and would prove detrimental to the overall well-being of kids in the long run.

Parents today feel as though they are limiting their child's freedom if they impose certain rules but that is not so. A child under eighteen is not capable of making rational decisions regarding his online behaviour. Parents must take a more involved approach when it comes to monitoring their children's online activity. The most important step is to limit the amount of screen time since this forces the child to form actual relationships and have real interactions outside the online community.

There is plenty of opportunity to form connections on the internet through chat boxes and messengers and while they are not all bad and do provide a sense of camaraderie and kinship, they are a poor substitute for real world relationships.

Teachers can follow much the same policies in their interaction with the kids as well. By showing them correct ways of surfing the internet, the harm of excessive use, and the guidelines they ought to follow, they can inculcate good online habits for the children. Schools must also take an active part in teaching kids about online safety and how to use to the internet in an appropriate manner. Conducting training classes would be a good way to try to introduce good online practices to kids.

Now, the best way to counter bad practices is to start practising good ones. Show them the great things they can do online. Try out some educational games for smaller kids. For the slightly older ones, encourage them to try learning coding and photoshop. Young kids are showing how skilled they can be in such tasks, so let your children explore those areas and see where their interest lies. Once something clicks, they will not be interested in immature communities and forums and their time will be used much more productively.

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Another important aspect that is usually ignored is actually telling the child they will monitor his online activity and telling him to do his online activity on the family PC. This is a great way to limit the possibility of him viewing harmful sites. Do not let children use a personal device unless you are sure they are mature enough to handle one. That sort of freedom must be earned and you should determine when the child is ready to handle a personal device. The pitfalls and problems of life on the internet are so vast and the consequences so dire, so a little caution goes a long way. Most importantly, communicate with your children about the time they spend online and how one can best use that time. Let them understand that you actually want to help them. Let them know that the online world can be as dangerous as it is wonderful and give them guidelines and tools to help them make good use of the wonderful tool that is the internet.